

Woman's Work for Improving School Houses and Promoting School Attendance.

Editors Progressive Farmer:

The "Woman's Association for the Betterment of Public School-houses in North Carolina," which was organized at the State Normal School in Greensboro in March, 1902, is doing a good work in many parts of the State. That it has opened a new avenue for women's energies is not to be questioned, since the work originated in the minds of teachers who knew the needs of the rural school from dear experiences. To overcome (if possible) these conditions, they arose in their might and enthusiasm hoping to inspire the women citizens of the State to come forward and volunteer to aid the teacher in the contest for the advancement of the rural school in whatever line seemed most needful. Perhaps one school would be found needing only a library; another in need of better surroundings—such as trees for protection, shrubs for adornment, better sanitary arrangements, better furnishings, more pictures, maps, globes, etc.

Now the school-houses as a general thing are in good condition in this county, and the school committees faithful in the discharge of their duties, but still there is room for improvement, and this should be woman's work. Every district could form its own association, electing a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Hold regular meetings once a month and call meetings when necessary. Make the school a social centre; make it attractive in its outside surroundings; attractive within, so that your child has a pride in the school where it must spend five days of every school week. Such an association is not only a help to the school committee and to the teacher (both of whom are expected to co-operate with the association), but to the members it will be a benefit in many ways. And to the children of a district it will be helpful, for are there not many little children in the highways and hedges who only need the kind persuasion of some one in whom they have confidence, to make them attend school?

This is the paramount object of a Woman's Association—to induce parents to take advantage of the splendid schools in their vicinity and to bring in the children who are not in school. This is the only solution to the problem that now confronts us. We should have a compulsory school law, but as this is not the case, something else must be done to do away with the illiteracy that prevails. It is a startling fact that 23 per cent of the white population of North Carolina can neither read nor write. May not the influence of good women of the State be brought to bear on this all important matter, and can it not best be done through organization, and, following this, personal work?

The way is now open for a march forward that has in it no politics and no aim to encroach on the preroga-

tive which has heretofore been the work of men. It is the woman's child, and might she not possess the right of having some "say" in the education of her child? Let the women and teachers of a district consider this well, and go forward in the work that has been so earnestly taken up in many parts of the State.

And now a word to our local teachers. For further information, let them apply to the Woman's Association for the Betterment of Public School Houses, in Raleigh, and any help in organizing district associations will cheerfully be given on application. It is to be hoped that Wake County will bring in as good report as any other county at the State Convention, which has been appointed to meet in Raleigh in June next—immediately after the Teachers' Assembly. It is to be hoped that there will be much competition for the two scholarships that are offered to the school teacher making the most improvement in the school house and surroundings.

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